



DECEMBER 2011

HOLIDAY

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

2011 A Year in Review



The most comprehensive and contentious issue that we addressed this year was reapportionment. We had input from the community members and organizations and the supervisors. Even with the differences in points of view, we were able to conduct fair and objective public hearings with hundreds of citizens

who expressed their opinions. The audience, which packed the boardroom to full capacity, was by and large courteous to their fellow citizens who had different points of views and allowing freedom of expression before the Board. In the end, the Supervisors were able to pass a reapportionment plan for the County that will be in effect for the next 10 years.

The ability for the County to work cooperatively has been strengthened because our staffs are able to work together. While we have different points of view from time to time, we've been able to work together constructively so that unlike the City across the street, our employees have gone three years without a salary increase to help the County weather the fiscal storm.

We've been able to maintain the delivery of services for public safety, health and other vital services. We just had devastating winds sweep through parts of the County and we still have citizens throughout the County who don't have power and energy and we'll discuss that a little bit later. The problem is not on the part of county agencies.

The County has a big responsibility, a big challenge. The challenge that we face is the state's re-alignment plan where we now have all of these inmates coming from the state prison that we'll be responsible for. The Board has come together to challenge these issues and to support legislation to make corrections; and, if necessary, make legal challenges in the

Court to prevent the flood of criminals into our communities, especially those with mental health problems that are a danger not only to others but to the entire community.

Overall, I just want to thank my staff for the last 12 months of good work that they have done, and my colleagues' staff for their ability to work together not only with each other but our Executive Office, CEO, County Counsel and other departments. I look forward to a great 2012 so we can keep this unity and constructive leadership going.

Looking Ahead to 2012

(The following represents Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky's incoming remarks, edited slightly for brevity.)



Thank you, Mike. Speaking for all your colleagues, it was a particularly challenging year. You did an outstanding job in navigating us through it and bringing to fruition a lot of things that had to be dealt with here and in some of our external responsibilities as a Board. I congratulate you on that.

It is reasonably self-evident that the continued fiscal challenges this County and all local governments face need to be first and foremost in our minds. The fiscal discipline maintained by this Board for many years that has enabled us to weather this recession must be maintained. Our employees, who have been great partners with us, our administrators - all of us have to recognize that the reason we have not laid off or furloughed anyone or done things other local governments or the state have done is because we have maintained that discipline. We need to continue doing that to keep everyone working, everyone earning a salary, putting

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Visit <http://dhr.lacounty.info>
for information on employment
opportunities with the
County of Los Angeles

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles 90036
(323) 857-6000
www.lacma.org

Through February 26 – Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World

Center Theatre Group
www.centertheatregroup.org

Ahmanson Theatre
Through January 22 – Fela!
May 3 through June 9 – Follies

Mark Taper Forum
January 11 through February 26 – Clybourne Park

Kirk Douglas Theatre
January 19 through February 19 – “A Raisin in the Sun”

Los Angeles Opera
(performances at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion)
www.losangelesopera.com

February 11 through March 4 – Verdi’s *Simon Boccanegra*
February 25 through March 17 – Britten’s *Albert Herring*

Kodak Theater
Now playing – Cirque du Soleil: IRIS

Natural History Museum
900 Exposition Boulevard, Los Angeles 90007
(213) 763-DINO
www.nhm.org

Now open – New Dinosaur Hall and Fin Whale Passage

The Ford
2580 Cahuenga Boulevard East, Hollywood 90068
(323) 461-3673
www.FordTheatres.org

January 21 through February 26 – No Good Deed



Members of the Board

Zev Yaroslavsky
Chairman
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Gloria Molina
First District

Mark Ridley-Thomas
Second District

Don Knabe
Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
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Submissions to the DIGEST may be
edited or otherwise altered for clarity.

<http://dhrdcap.co.la.ca.us/jic/digest/>
Check out the DIGEST at

Supervisor Knabe Delivers Annual State of the County

Supervisor Don Knabe delivered his fifth annual state of Los Angeles County to a capacity crowd at a luncheon at the Long Beach Convention Center. He called for more focus on supporting businesses, creating jobs and reforming programs. With the County's caseloads for programs and services at an all-time high, Knabe pushed for public/private partnerships to put people back to work.

In addition to encouraging business-friendly policies and job training programs, he said the County must be more aggressive about ensuring that scarce taxpayer resources are directed to those most in need. "With the crunch on our resources and a near doubling of our caseloads since 2007, we must be even more diligent about where our money is spent. We may not be able to solve the world's financial crisis, but we can get our own house in order," Knabe said.

At this holiday season, Knabe asked that we all remember those who are making the ultimate sacrifice for our country: "May we all give thanks to those who knowingly put themselves in harm's way so that we can continue to enjoy the freedoms we too often take for granted."

Recycle Your Christmas Tree

Every year, millions of Christmas trees are tossed out in Los Angeles County. Make sure you plan ahead to recycle your tree.

This holiday season, CLEAN LA encourages you to use convenient curbside recycling to take the hassle out of getting rid of your Christmas tree. Christmas tree recycling is a great way to help preserve our natural resources and reduce waste.

To have your Christmas tree recycled into compost, mulch, or ground cover, remove all items from your tree such as water containers, tree stands, ornaments, tinsel, and nails and place your tree at the curbside on your regular collection day from December 26, 2011 through January 14, 2012.

Visit www.CleanLA.com or call (888) CLEAN LA for more information on the Christmas tree recycling guidelines in your area.

Keeping Pets Safe Throughout the Holiday Season

The holiday season, a joy-filled time for many people, can pose some risks for pets. The Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) recommend the following tips to help keep your pets safe during the holidays:

- Never feed or allow your pets to eat chocolate or other holiday candies. Chocolate is poisonous to dogs and cats and can cause death. If you witness or suspect your pet of eating chocolate, transport him or her to a veterinarian as soon as possible.
- Shiny ornaments on Christmas trees can be particularly attractive to curious pets. Dogs and cats can suffer serious injuries by chewing and swallowing pieces of tree ornaments.
- Many people add special liquid preservatives to the water in Christmas tree stands. Some of these products are harmful to pets that may drink from the water. Be sure to ask if your Christmas tree is "pet safe," before you buy it.
- Keep holiday season plants and flowers away from your pets. Many plants, such as poinsettias, Christmas candles, English holly, Christmas berry, Christmas Rose, and mistletoe are poisonous to cats and dogs.
- Gift-wrappings can pose risks to dogs and cats. Your pets may be tempted to chew on wrapping paper or ribbon, which can be harmful if swallowed.
- Electrical wiring is tempting for cats to play with and dogs to chew. Your pet can suffer a severe shock or even be electrocuted by coming into contact with the electrical current in the line. Make sure your pets cannot climb onto areas that put wiring within their reach.
- Turkey is a particular favorite during the holiday season, but the bones easily splinter and should not be given to pets. Bone splinters can puncture an animal's gastro-intestinal tract, causing internal injury, which could result in death.
- Keep your pets away from alcoholic beverages. Do not let anyone offer a "sample" of your favorite libation to a pet.

The Bricks to Perform on 52nd Annual L.A. County Holiday Celebration

Comprised of eight “at-risk” youth (ages 17-20) living in Los Angeles County, The Bricks is a band with a conscience. Developed out of the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission’s (HRC) Project One Youth Music and Human Relations Mentoring Program in 2010, the student musicians in the band were chosen from among hundreds. Band members boast backgrounds as diverse as the County itself and deliver an eclectic mix of hip hop, soul, rock, Latin and world music, with songs that address many of the societal issues facing teens today.



The band has inspired young people like themselves with their empowering message of hope, resilience and inspiration, performing in L.A. County’s juvenile halls, incarceration camps and high schools. Now, The Bricks will make their debut during the L.A. County Holiday Celebration, performing an originally composed piece called “Peace on Earth, Can it Be?,” which pays tribute to the Bing Crosby and David Bowie 1977 collaboration “Peace on Earth/Little Drummer Boy.”

The Bricks are writing a soundtrack for their generation to spread the message that music can do more than entertain. It can educate and inspire. Their debut album *This Land* is mentored/produced by professional and Grammy® Award-winning producers KC Porter (Santana, Ozomatli), Money Mark (Beastie Boys), DJ Khalil (Eminem, Dr. Dre), JB Eckl (Santana, En-vogue) and DJ Cminus (Korn).

The Bricks are among the 24 performing groups featured at the admission-free **L.A. County Holiday Celebration**, the region’s biggest Emmy-nominated holiday show and a gift to the community from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. The three-hour extravaganza from **3 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, December 24**, at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of the Music Center is produced by the L.A. County Arts Commission. Choirs, music ensembles and dance companies from the many neighborhoods and cultures of L.A. celebrate the season in the family friendly show. The Holiday Celebration is broadcast live on KCET TV and then rebroadcast from 8 to 11 p.m. It’s simulcast on 90.7 FM KPFK and streamed live at www.kcet.org. Go to www.holidaycelebration.org or call **(213) 972-3099** for more information. Happy Holidays from the County!

LOOKING AHEAD

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food on their family tables. As things turn around, as we hope they will and they inevitably do, we will respond appropriately in what has been a unique partnership with our County employment workforce.

The people who depend on us for services, as Mike said, are particularly stressed at a time like this. Our budget gets stressed. But the unique thing about this County is that when the economy goes down, the demand for services goes up. Our ability to respond to people in need is particularly challenged when they need it most. We have to continue not only to maintain our ability to provide for those in need, but also to be strong and sometimes uncompromising advocates with our partners in Sacramento to ensure that those with softer voices are not drowned out, forgotten and left behind.

Healthcare remains one of our number one challenges. We have a great new Health Director in Mitch Katz, even as we face great challenges in the Department. We could have

no better steward, in both the area of health reform and in managing our own Department, to ensure that resources are sufficient and services are available today and when we eventually reopen Martin Luther King, Jr. Hospital.

Regarding the issue of homelessness, as a County we’ve already done a lot. But now it’s time to ratchet up our efforts. I propose that we establish an interdepartmental task force for homelessness, bringing together stakeholder departments with a common focus, guided by the policies of this Board, to take us to a new level of partnership with our cities and nonprofit organizations. It remains one of the great stains on our society, nationally, that we have not yet been able to get our arms around the homelessness issue. Our County, at least, has been moving in the right direction.

Finally, it is my hope that we will be able to integrate our Board operations a little more closely with our administrative bureaucracy, improving coordination and communication with fewer surprises and more collaboration. I’m confident that through our collective efforts, we can do it.

Tips for Beating Holiday Blues

It's a time of celebration, parties, and get-togethers, but sometimes, the holiday season can also be a source of the blues, especially for older people. Older adults may think about how quickly time has passed, or miss loved ones more during this time of year. Health conditions or concerns about money can also make it harder to enjoy the holidays. Fortunately, there are ways to help cope with the melancholy that may accompany the holidays and the American Geriatrics Society Foundation for Health in Aging offers the following:

If you feel blue, try to:

Get out and about—Ask family and friends for help traveling to parties and events. Invite family and friends over.

Volunteer—Helping others is a great mood lifter. To volunteer, contact your local United Way (it's listed in the phone book or check www.unitedway.org) or call local schools, churches, synagogues or mosques and ask about volunteer opportunities in your neighborhood.

Limit the eggnog—Too much alcohol can lower your spirits.

Accept your feelings—There's nothing "wrong" with not feeling jolly. Many people get the blues during the holidays.

Confide in someone—Talk about your feelings. It can help you understand why you feel the way you do.

Recognize warning signs of depression—Holiday blues are usually temporary and mild but depression is more serious and can linger unless you get help. Look for these signs:

- sadness that won't lift or loss of interest or pleasure
- changes in appetite or weight or sleeping a lot more or a lot less than usual
- crying often
- feeling restless or tired all the time
- feeling worthless, helpless or guilty
- slowed thinking
- thoughts of death or suicide

Start the healing—If you're depressed, see your healthcare provider. Depression is very treatable.

If an older loved one has the blues or seems depressed:

Include them—Invite them out and to get-togethers. Take into account their needs such as transportation or special diets.

Lend a hand—Offer help with shopping and preparation for get-togethers in their homes.

Be a good listener—Encourage your loved one to talk about how he or she is feeling. Acknowledge "difficult" feelings, including a sense of loss if family or friends have died or moved away.

Encourage him or her to talk with a healthcare provider—Many older people don't realize when they're depressed. If you suspect depression, you may need to bring it up more than once. Let your loved one know depression is a medical illness and is nothing to be ashamed of.

ACCESS

1 (800) 854-7771

Department of Mental Health



Holiday Giving at LACoFD: Spark of Love

With the holiday season upon us, the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD) has once again joined together with ABC7 Television for the 19th Annual ABC7 & Firefighters' "Spark of Love" Holiday Toy Drive. From now until December 25th, every fire station will be collecting new unwrapped toys and sports equipment that will be distributed to over 70,000 foster children in our communities by the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. As is tradition, the Metrolink Holiday Toy Express will be traveling from city to city to entertain families and collect toys. This year's goal is to collect 40,000 toys and in order to meet that goal, we need your help.

LACoFD is asking each County employee to meet our firefighters at one of the holiday train stops with a new unwrapped toy. The Metrolink Holiday Express train schedule can be found at <http://www.metrolinktrains.com/>. For additional information, please contact our Public information Office at (323) 881-2411.

Give the Gift of Reading

Here are some suggestions from the L.A. County Public Library staff. For even more recommendations, contact your local County Public Library.

Preschool

A Christmas Tree for Pyn by Olivier Dunrea

If You Give a Dog a Donut by Laura Numeroff

Moo by Matthew Van Fleet

Myrtle by Tracey Campbell Pearson

Press Here by Hervé Tullet

Stars by Mary Lyn Ray

School Aged

Bink and Gollie by Kate DiCamillo, Allison McGhee and Tony Fucile (Ages 6 and up)

The Day Glo Brothers by Chris Barton and Tony Persiani (Ages 7 and up)

Dead End in Norvelt by Jack Gantos (Ages 10 and up)

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever by Jeff Kinney (Ages 8 and up)

The Fingertips of Duncan Dorfman by Meg Wolitzer

A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story by Linda Sue Park (Ages 9 and up)

Once Upon a Twice by Denise Doyen and Barry Moser (Ages 6 and up)

Wildwood by Colin Meloy (Ages 9 and up)

Wonderstruck by Brian Selznick (Ages 9 and up)

Teens

The Death Cure: Maze Runner Trilogy, Book Three by James Dashner

Down the Mysterly River by Bill Willingham

Goliath: Leviathan Trilogy, Book Three by Scott Westerfeld

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs

Ready Player One by Ernest Cline

The Scorpio Races by Maggie Stiefvater

RR/CC Proud Sponsor in the City of Norwalk's Angel Tree Program

For the past 16 years, the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) has been a proud sponsor and participant in the City of Norwalk's Angel Tree Program. The Angel Tree is an annual holiday season project that benefits approximately 1,500 less fortunate children (Grades K-5) in the community.

Facilitated by the RR/CC's Social Committee, the Department sponsors and hosts an Angel Tree in the lobby of its headquarters in Norwalk. The tree is adorned with Angels bearing the first name, age and clothing size of a child. RR/CC employees can help make a child's holiday season special by becoming Angel Tree contributors.

Employees simply select an Angel Tree tag from the tree, purchase an article of clothing, and return the wrapped gift with the tag to a representative of the RR/CC Social Committee. The Social Committee also makes sure no child is left behind by purchasing gifts for any Angel tags remaining on the tree at the end of the program. When all gifts are collected, the Social Committee delivers the packages to the City of Norwalk's Social Services Center. This seasonal program is very special to many RR/CC employees and there is a strong commitment throughout the Department of giving back to the community.

The Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk encourages all to look into similar programs in their own communities this holiday season. As their staff has found over these past 16 years, there is no more rewarding gift than the gift of giving.



Give Green this Christmas

To promote a more sustainable Los Angeles County this holiday season, it's simple: reduce the amount of trash you generate.

Here are some holiday ideas to help you reduce, reuse, and recycle your waste. We also have tips on alternative gift-giving/wrapping ideas to make this holiday as green as can be!

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle tips

- **Use Reusable Bags**—Whether shopping for the holidays or just everyday things like groceries, make sure to take along a reusable shopping bag and you will help reduce the number of single-use disposable bags distributed by retailers.
- **Give a Gift Card**—They never expire and they require no fancy gift wrapping.
- **Say 'Happy Holidays' Over the Phone or Internet**—Save postage and trees by sending electronic holiday cards this year. Check the selection at commercial sites like hallmark.com, bluemountain.com, or 123christmascards.com for free e-mail cards.
- **Repurpose Old Holiday Cards**—Cut up cards to be used as gift tags, bookmarks, greeting cards, place mats, or decorations.
- **Recycle That Tree**—Contact your trash hauler for recycling options in your city. You can also turn your Christmas tree into mulch for water conservation and weed control in the garden.
- **Consider the Environment**—Sprayed-on artificial snow can be made from environmentally harmful components and hinder the ability to recycle a Christmas tree. For more Earth-friendly artificial snow, sprinkle on some baking powder.
- **Think Outside the Gift Box**—Purchase gift bags or baskets from your local dollar stores or charity thrift shops and reuse them each year.
- **Buy Reusable Batteries**—Consider purchasing rechargeable batteries instead of single-use batteries.
- **Recycle Packing Peanuts**—Check with local packaging or shipping companies to see if they will accept foam peanuts for recycling. Call "The Peanut Hotline" at (800) 828-2214 to find the nearest location.
- **Make Room for New Gadgets & Toys**—Post your unwanted electronics on the County's Materials Exchange Website (www.LAComax.com). If they are broken, take them to a Household Hazardous Waste Collection event. Outgrown toys, clothes, and furniture may be donated to

charitable groups like Goodwill, The Salvation Army, American Cancer Society, or Volunteers of America. Many local charities operate thrift stores and are always looking for donated items.

- **Recycle Old Holiday Lights**—Recycle broken or burned-out holiday lights by mailing them to Christmas Light Source Recycling Program, 1923 6th Ave., Ft. Worth, Texas 76110. The bulbs will be recycled, and proceeds will be used to purchase books for the Marine Toys for Tots.
- **Save on Gift Wrap**—Save and reuse gift wrapping paper from previous years, or make some from butcher paper, reused brown paper bags, newspapers, and fabric. Shop for recycled-content holiday wrapping paper.

Visit www.CleanLA.com or call 1(888) CLEAN LA for more information on the Christmas tree recycling guidelines in your area and to find the closest location to a Household Hazardous Waste Collection event.



Tips for a Safe Holiday Season from the Sheriff's Department

Plan a safe way home before the festivities begin

Before drinking, designate a sober driver

If you are impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation

Use your community's Sober Rides Program

If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, do not hesitate to contact your local law enforcement

And remember, Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk

If you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely

Keeping Young Children Safe While Visiting Over the Holidays

If you have young children and plan to visit homes of family and friends this holiday season, the Department of Public Health has some suggestions to help keep your child safe while in a new and different environment. Young children like to explore unfamiliar homes, and adults tend to become distracted when visiting. The combination exposes an inquisitive infant or toddler to potential injury.

Scope out your new surroundings and look for hazards such as staircases, fireplaces, poisonous plants, medications, tree ornaments, etc. A lapse of supervision can easily put an infant or toddler in an increased risk of poisoning, falling, choking and suffocating by being exposed to small decorations, plants, or non-age-appropriate toys. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission concludes that every year more than one-half of holiday-related injuries are among infants and toddlers exposed to these risks, sometimes resulting in hospitalization or death.

The following recommendations should help keep your child safer when visiting others' homes this holiday season:

- Homes you visit may not be childproof. Look for dangers such as electrical outlets and power cords, unstable holiday trees, small decorations that can be ingested, stairwells, swimming pools, sharp corners, etc.
- Clean up immediately after a holiday party. A toddler can choke on leftover food, or come in contact with alcohol or tobacco.
- If the home has a pool or a Jacuzzi, make sure all doors leading to these areas remain locked at all times.
- Traveling, visiting family and friends, shopping, opening gifts, etc., can affect your child's stress levels. Try to stick to your child's usual routines, including sleep and nap schedules.

Lastly, if you leave your child at home or in a hotel with a sitter, make certain that the sitter has a list of important phone numbers—pediatrician, police, fire department and the national Poison Help Line at (800) 222-1222.

Bringing Holiday Cheer

The Community Development Commission (CDC)/Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) works year-long to *Build Better Lives and Better Neighborhoods*. For the CDC and HACoLA, the holidays present the perfect opportunity to ensure that their program participants and their families are able to embrace and enjoy the spirit of the season.

Each year, HACoLA hosts its Resident Services Program's Annual Toy Drive which provides gifts to over 500 youth living throughout the County's public housing developments. This year, it will be held from December 13-20.



2010 Holiday Basket and Toy Giveaway

For over 10 years, the Annual Toy Drive has brought holiday cheer to the low-income residents. Through the generous donations from partners and donors, the Drive allows public housing residents to kick off the holiday season with food, games, and a community celebration. The youth receive gifts which have included age-appropriate toys and clothing.

On December 21, CDC will hold its 15th Annual Holiday Basket and Toy Giveaway for 300 unincorporated Whittier-area families. The event has been held since 1996 and jointly-sponsored by Supervisors Molina and Knabe, and the CDC.

Preparation for this event started in September when the South Whittier Community Resource Center (SWCRC) staff began pre-registration of income qualified families, solicitations for contributions, and recruitment of various community/volunteer groups who donate hours of labor to make the event possible. Each pre-qualified family will receive a food basket including a turkey with all the holiday trimmings and toys for each child.

These events would not be possible without the generous support of organizations such as Shelter Partnership, Inc.,

Just In Time for the Holidays: Self-Sufficiency

In an Associated Press article published by *The Daily Breeze* in September 2011, readers learned of a former Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) CalWORKs and Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) participant who had an inspiring success story.

Tamara Washington became a CalWORKs participant in June 2009. Subsequently, the following month, she was assigned to West County GAIN Region I, where she was immediately selected to participate in a program funded via the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act known as the Temporary Subsidized Employment (TSE) program.

TSE provided free labor to collaborating businesses that in turn employed DPSS GAIN participants like Washington.

Through the help of DPSS GAIN staff, Washington was employed at a Torrance-based conferencing company. Once the program ended, she seamlessly acquired full-time, unsubsidized employment and has remained self-sufficient ever since. Essentially, she was only receiving CalWORKs for the year that she participated in the TSE program.

Because of her outstanding success story, President Obama's staff invited Washington and others to sit with First Lady Michelle Obama at the Joint Session of Congress meeting at the State Capitol in September. Washington continues her extraordinary self-sufficiency, thus affording her and her family with so much to celebrate this holiday season.



HOLIDAY CHEER

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Fire Department Station 96, Sheriff's Department, local Boy and Girl Scout troops, Presbyterian Inter-Community Hospital, California Highway Patrol, CDC/HACoLA staff, other local community-based organizations, and area businesses that donate time, food, toys, and supplies.

The event would not be complete without a visit from Santa Claus who stops by to greet families, hands out gifts, and takes photographs with children. Events like these allow the CDC/HACoLA to give L.A. County residents holiday memories that will last a lifetime.

For more information on the SWCRC, visit www.swcrc.org. For information on the Resident Services Program, visit www.hacola.org.

Choosing Age-Appropriate Toys and Practicing Toy Safety

When shopping for children's gifts this holiday season, the Department of Public Health has some tips for parents and other shoppers on identifying toys that are safe and age appropriate. While most toys are manufactured to government safety regulations, injuries still occur.

In 2010, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reported that more than 250,000 children—half younger than age five—were sent to emergency rooms for toy-related injuries including choking, falling, suffocation and strangulation. Common injuries for older children frequently resulted from riding toys without using proper safety equipment such as a helmet. Many of these injuries could have been prevented with more effective adult supervision and by following the toy manufacturer warning labels and recommendations.

The following checklist should help in selecting the safest and most age-appropriate toys:

- Read labels for recommended age, ability, skills and interest level.
- Never give children 10 years of age and younger a toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet. Instead, buy toys that are battery-operated.
- Children younger than three years of age can choke on small parts contained in toys or games. Government regulations specify that toys for children younger than age three cannot have parts less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches long.
- If giving a gift with wheels (bicycle, scooter, skateboard, in-line skates, etc.), provide proper safety equipment such as helmets and pads.
- Keep batteries away from young children. If swallowed, they can cause serious stomach and intestinal problems.
- Children younger than age eight can choke or suffocate on uninflated or burst balloons. Keep them out of reach or clean up immediately.
- Remove strings and ribbons from gift packaging before giving them to young children.
- Pull toys with strings longer than 12 inches in length can be a strangulation hazard.
- Keep older kids' toys away from young children.

For a complete list of safe and age-appropriate toys by age group, visit the CPSC link at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/285.pdf>.

All About Us



Employees of the County of Los Angeles

LA COUNTY STARS!



October 2011

**Service Excellence and Organizational Effectiveness:
Healthcare Fraud Division Team
District Attorney's Office**



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Carla Arranaga
David Berger
David Berton
April Bouiri
William Brown
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Sandra Olivera
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Cristina Turpen
Sharon Wright



LA COUNTY STARS! serves to recognize employee performance reflective of the County's mission statement and values. Under **LA COUNTY STARS!**, Board staff, management and non-management employees, individuals, and teams may be recognized. Board Chiefs of Staff, Deputy Chief Executive Officers, Department Heads, and Chief Deputies are not eligible to be nominated.

For more information, please contact the Department of Human Resources at (213) 893-7810 or visit the Website at <http://stars.lacounty.gov/>.

Retirees

Congratulations to the following employees who are joining the ranks of the retired after their many years of service to Los Angeles County:

40+ Years

HEALTH SERVICES: Carmen M. Leiva, Donna M. Samuels
INTERNAL SERVICES: Daniel F. Holley
PROBATION: Kenneth D. Huggler, Martha Leon
REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK: Harriett Coleman Russ
SHERIFF: Mila A. Emerson, Anita L. Gutmann, Larry L. Waldie

30+ Years

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER/WEIGHTS & MEASURES: Steve L. Rawald
ALTERNATE PUBLIC DEFENDER: David P. Carleton
ASSESSOR: Marilyn N. Kishi
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: Eliseo J. Millen
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CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES: Vicky Enger, Roberta J. Laing
FIRE: Robert Bangar Jr., Darryl B. Dutton, Elizabeth Peralta
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PUBLIC HEALTH: Jaime T. Alisangco
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Clara Ferral, Liliam Perez
PUBLIC WORKS: David C. Litchfield
SHERIFF: Joann T. Bourgeois, Daniel J. Delgado, Randall P. Dickey, Caroline Espinoza, Earnestine J. Henderson, Mark S. Klausing, Joseph N. Lomonaco, Teresa R. Vasquez
SUPERIOR COURT: Joyce A. Butler, Jose L. Tellez, Mary J. Thomas

25+ Years

ASSESSOR: Deborah A. Lane, Alex T. Reyes, Gary P. Townsend
CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES: Barbara Broome, Charmilla E. Jonson, Lucy Moya
FIRE: Timothy R. Smith
HEALTH SERVICES: Eric Coleman, Rebecca G. Gonzales, Sidonna I. Kuhn, Vankhanh T. Le-Pham, Reuben M. Romo
INTERNAL SERVICES: Gene F. Aversa
MENTAL HEALTH: Conchita Dela Torre, Joan E. Lovell
PROBATION: Robert J. Lacefield
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Carmelita V. Cabangon
PUBLIC WORKS: Sevensa L. Hodson, Daniel B. Martinez, Louis V. Munoz
SHERIFF: Deborah H. Adams, Daniel M. Figueroa, John W. Kalinas III, Anthony Leon, Melinda M. Rasch, Brenda J. Wooten
SUPERIOR COURT: Luz M. Weaver



Marina Del Rey Greets the New Year with Fireworks Spectacular

A brilliant display of fireworks will light up the skies over Marina del Rey on Saturday, December 31, to usher in the New Year, with a five-minute spectacular beginning at the 30-second countdown to midnight.

The fireworks are presented by Zambelli Fireworks Internationale, which originated more than 100 years ago in Italy and is known worldwide for its spectacular productions. The fireworks will be shot off the south jetty and can be viewed throughout the Marina. Best locations for viewing are Fisherman's Village at 13755 Fiji Way and Burton Chace Park at 13650 Mindanao Way. Parking is available for a minimal fee in Los Angeles County lots throughout Marina del Rey.

The New Year's Eve Fireworks Spectacular is organized by the Marina del Rey Holiday Boat Parade committee and made possible with the generous contributions of California Yacht Club, C&O Trattoria/Cucina, City National Security Services, Drollinger Properties, Equinox Fitness Clubs, FantaSea Yachts & Yacht Club, Hornblower Cruises & Events, Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors, Los Angeles World Airports, Marina del Rey Convention & Visitors Bureau, Marina Del Rey Hospital, Marina del Rey Lessees Association, Marina del Rey Marriott, Marina Harbor Apartments & Anchorage, Mariner's Village, Pacifica Hotel Company, Playa Vista, Shanghai Red's, Tahiti Marina, The Argonaut, The Parking Spot, The Ritz-Carlton, Union Bank, Villa del Mar Apartments & Marina and Wells Fargo Bank.

For additional information about the New Year's Eve Fireworks, call (310) 670-7130.



Share It

Be a Smarter Shopper This Holiday Season

Make gift-giving great and avoid the New Year's budget blues!

Ten holiday shopping tips from the Department of Consumer Affairs

1. Stick to a budget

Prepare a holiday budget before you shop. Pay with cash to keep from spending too much.

2. Use credit cards wisely

If you pay with a credit card, use just one. If you pay by credit card, you get legal protections if you don't receive what you ordered or if products are defective. Read the terms of your [credit card](#) agreement.

3. Get your R&R – refunds and receipts

Check for a store's [refund](#) policies, or ask about them, before you buy. Some stores offer a full refund; others offer only a store credit or no refund at all. Save your receipts and ask for gift receipts. You or the person getting your gifts will need them for returns and exchanges.

4. Check for sale prices

When you buy sale items, check your receipt before you leave the cash register. Make sure they did not [charge](#) you the regular price. If something you buy goes on sale later, ask about sales adjustments and you might get a refund or credit.

5. Get full value from gift cards

If you receive [gift cards](#), spend them as soon as possible. U.S. consumers waste about \$10 billion a year by not spending their gift cards. Also, you can redeem any retailer gift card for cash if it has a cash value of less than \$10. Donated gift cards are exempt. [The law](#) forbids nearly all service fees on retailer gift cards. In California, most gift cards don't expire no matter what the fine print says. (These rules do not apply to bank gift cards, which are issued by American Express, Discover, MasterCard, and Visa and can be used at most stores.)

6. Read the fine print

If you're making a big purchase, read the [contract](#) and understand it before you sign. Check the interest rate and the total cost of the item including interest. Make sure you can afford the total price.

7. Know the way to layaway

Some bigger stores offer [layaway](#). If you buy an item by layaway, get a full receipt with a description of the item, total price, amount of the down payment, amount and due dates of payments, length of the hold and the store's refund policy.

8. Stay secure online

When buying [online](#), make sure the website is secure before entering your personal or financial information. Secure websites begin with "https://" rather than just "http://." They also display a locked padlock on the screen.

9. Protect your personal information

Don't be a victim of [identity theft](#). Do not give personal information over the telephone or online unless you contacted that person or business. Do not write your address, phone number, Social Security, or driver's license numbers on credit-card receipts. Before giving personal or financial information to a business, ask how they will use it and if it will remain confidential.

10. When you give, know where it's going

Watch out for phony charities that use names which sound like the real charities. Don't be fooled. Look closely and only donate to groups you trust.

For more consumer information, go to the Consumer Affairs website at dca.lacounty.gov or call (800) 593-8222.

WeTip
WELFARE FRAUD
1 (800) 87-FRAUD